

4ID FRG Conference

“Team Ironhorse: Our Heroic Journey Toward Grit, Grace and Growth”

COL LOREE K. SUTTON
Commander, USA MEDCEN
Fort Hood, Texas
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lore.e.sutton@us.army.mil



You are not alone

~Our Leadership Charge~

“It is also critical that we acknowledge that this Global War on Terrorism places unprecedented burdens on our Soldiers and families.”

General Peter Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff

“The human response to the stresses of combat operations is really almost a bell shaped curve. Some people are fine, some severely traumatized – and in the middle is a large group who has been changed and may just need a little bit of counseling.”

LTG Kevin Kiley, Army Surgeon General



Never leave a fallen comrade

~Our Leadership Charge~

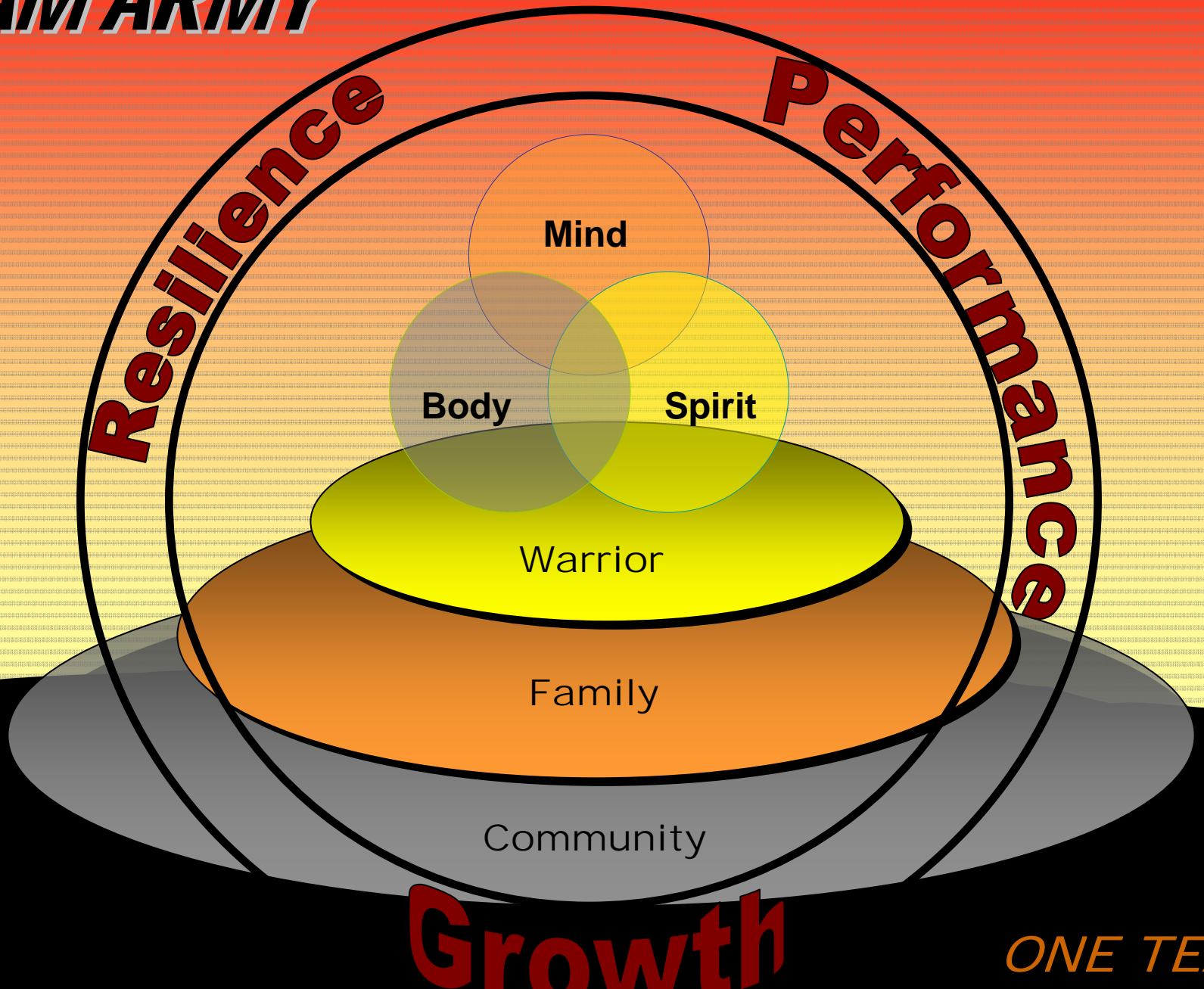
“Here’s what you’re telling me, Doc – this trauma stuff is more than a medical issue – this is about *LEADERSHIP!*”

GEN Dan K. McNeill, FORSCOM CDR



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TEAM ARMY



ONE TEAM!

~BLUF~

- ***Army transformation starts between the ears . . . with inspirational tough leaders who recognize the toll of combat and do everything within their power to “lead by example” and support the total Army Family . . . and transform the institutional Army to meet the needs of our Joint and Expeditionary Force***
- ***Leaders must engage Warriors and loved ones on our heroic journey of journeys – sustained by grit, grace and growth***
- ***Change = loss = grief . . . healing of the heart takes work, time and courage***
- ***Traumatic stress is common AND normal; for most, it is temporary . . . Self-aid / buddy-aid / unit & community support and treatment services are vital tools***
- ***RESETTING well-being is about restoring mental, physical and spiritual fitness to thrive in any setting . . . and to maximize post-traumatic growth***
- ***Know that seeking professional power IS a sign of strength***
- ***Take time to be still . . . while contemplating the blessings AND responsibilities of serving our Nation . . . there simply is no greater privilege***
- ***We’re all in this together . . . Perhaps this is the biggest blessing of all***



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~Agenda~

- Heroic Truths
- Combat & Home front Realities
- Misconceptions / Facts / Warning Signs
- When Trauma Strikes
- Post-Traumatic Growth Potential / Building Resilience
- “Good Grief” / “BattleMind”
- Web Resources
- Coping With Extraordinary Stress / Children / FRG ops
- Summary

**** Special Thanks to Team FORSCOM, Team USAREUR, COL Rhonda Cornum, MG Eric Schoomaker /MRMC, COL Tom Kolditz /USMA, LTC Carl Castro /WRAIR, BG John Macdonald /CFSC, Col (Ret) Robert Ursano /USUHS, COL Peter Garibaldi, LTC Frank Christopher /82nd ABN, MAJ Tim Bergeron /DACH, Team Hood, LTC Andrew Kosmowski /10th MTN, MAJ Len Bowley & the entire FORSCOM G1 / Safety / Well-being / Surgeon Team**



Never leave a fallen comrade

~Heroic Truths~

- **You are not alone . . . grit is not enough**
- **We are all in this together . . . by God's grace**
- **Trauma can yield personal growth as well as extraordinary stress**
- **Seeking power is a sign of strength**
- **During tough times, there is no better place to serve than in our Army Family . . .**



~Realities of Combat~

- Fear in combat is common
- Unit members will be injured and killed
- Combat affects every warrior on numerous levels: mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually
- Warriors frequently *perceive* failures in leadership
- Breakdowns in communication are common
- Many Warriors are afraid to admit that they have a mental health problem
- Deployments place a enormous strain on families
- The combat environment is harsh and demanding
- Unit and team stability are disrupted by combat
- Combat is rife with moral and ethical challenges
- Ambiguity / uncertainty of counter-insurgency warfare
- Risk of “compassion fatigue”



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~Realities of Life on the Home Front~

- Stress of maintaining home front in Europe instead of CONUS
- Barrage of anti-American sentiment; elevated risk of terrorists targeting American military abroad
- Anxious worried children, on top of our own worries
- Deployed spouses *AND* children – an extraordinary load
- Broken-down car, washer, heater, you name it!
- Illness—you, the kids, parents, in-laws, the dog. . .
- Life in a fishbowl—always being observed as a leader
- Bad hair days and no time to make an appointment
- Cumulative effect of FRG leadership duties
- Conflicting demands—home / FRG / unit / office
- Media overload—yet unable to turn TV / radio / computer off
- Frustrations of cyber / phone communication
- Reintegration challenges / Dual deployments (spouse & child)
- Fear of “trial by media” / damage to personal / family reputation
- Support for returning casualties (AC & RC)
- Support for families who have lost their loved ones



Never leave a fallen comrade

~Misconceptions About Traumatic Stress~

- **“It will never happen to me”**
- **“It’s just a bunch of slackers trying to get out of duty”**
- **“It is something that happened after Viet Nam, not now”**
- **“What if I am going crazy?!”**
- **“Nobody can understand what I went through”**
- **“If I let myself cry, I might not be able to ever stop”**
- **“I will never be able to love again . . .”**
- **“PTSD happens to everyone and there’s nothing you can do to prevent or treat it”**
- **“Folks with mental health problems are like Rambo and will go ‘postal’ on you”**
- **“Show me a guy who claims to have PTSD and I’ll beat his *\$#@!”**
- **“Nobody ever recovers from war to lead a productive life”**
- **“PTSD only happens to wimps and ‘girly-men’ . . .”**



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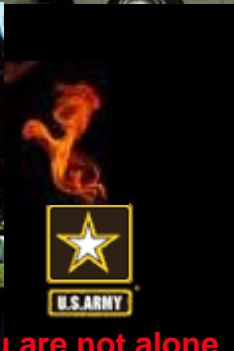
Our Warriors, our Heroes ...

Embarked upon a journey of journeys ...

Standing on the shoulders of giants ...



Never leave a fallen comrade



You are not alone

"Good Grief" for Families and Care Teams

- **Prior Preparation for Care Teams is critical**
 - Bridge family needs through initial 48-72 hours post-notification
 - Care Team includes Chaplain, Casualty Assistance Officer, FRG & Rear-Detachment leadership
 - Local hospice collaboration can be helpful
- **Definition / Stages of Grief**
 - Change = Loss = Grief
 - T = To accept the reality of the loss
 - E = Experience the pain of the loss
 - A = Adjust to the new environment
 - R = Reinvest in the new reality
- **Care for the Caregiver**
 - Stable personal life / support system
 - Healing presence
 - Protective role
 - Human touch
 - "Buddy System" / Debriefing / Rest Cycles



Never leave a fallen comrade

~Facts on Post-Traumatic Stress~

- *EVERYONE* experiences stress as a normal reaction to extraordinarily unique challenges and dangers of deployment
- Reactions vary among Warriors but commonly include strong emotional, mental, behavioral and/or physical reactions, including numbness, or the lack of feeling, as well as intense irritability and “adrenalin overload”
- Reactions typically lessen in intensity within the first 60-90 days following return from deployment but may persist or occur later, particularly after the “honeymoon” is over
- Individuals may understandably fear that they are “going crazy” as they experience normal post-traumatic stress reactions
- Warriors & loved ones “RESET” well being – ***and maximize their potential for post-traumatic personal growth*** –by recognizing signs of common reactions and behavior and learning proven skills to meet reintegration, reunion and relationship challenges
- Leaders need to ensure that every Warrior comes home with a war story that he or she can live with --- this requires talking about disturbing experiences and helping Warriors understand the big picture of what actually happened within their squad / unit; integrating “shards” of individual experience is critical
- ***Seeking professional power is a sign of strength***



Never leave a fallen comrade

~Warning Signs~

- “SPC X refuses to go the range”
- “LT Y comes to formation smelling like a brewery”
- “1SG Z is angry all the time, and takes it out on us”
- “My husband refuses to go out anymore – he won’t eat in restaurants or go to the mall like we used to”
- “My roommate has not slept well in a month”
- My boyfriend just bought a motorcycle and joined the local Ninja Club without taking lessons”
- “I feel anxious putting my uniform on”
- “Joe keeps to himself all the time now”
- “I used to be strack, but now I just don’t like the Army anymore”
- “My buddy got killed -- it should have been me”



~When Trauma Strikes~

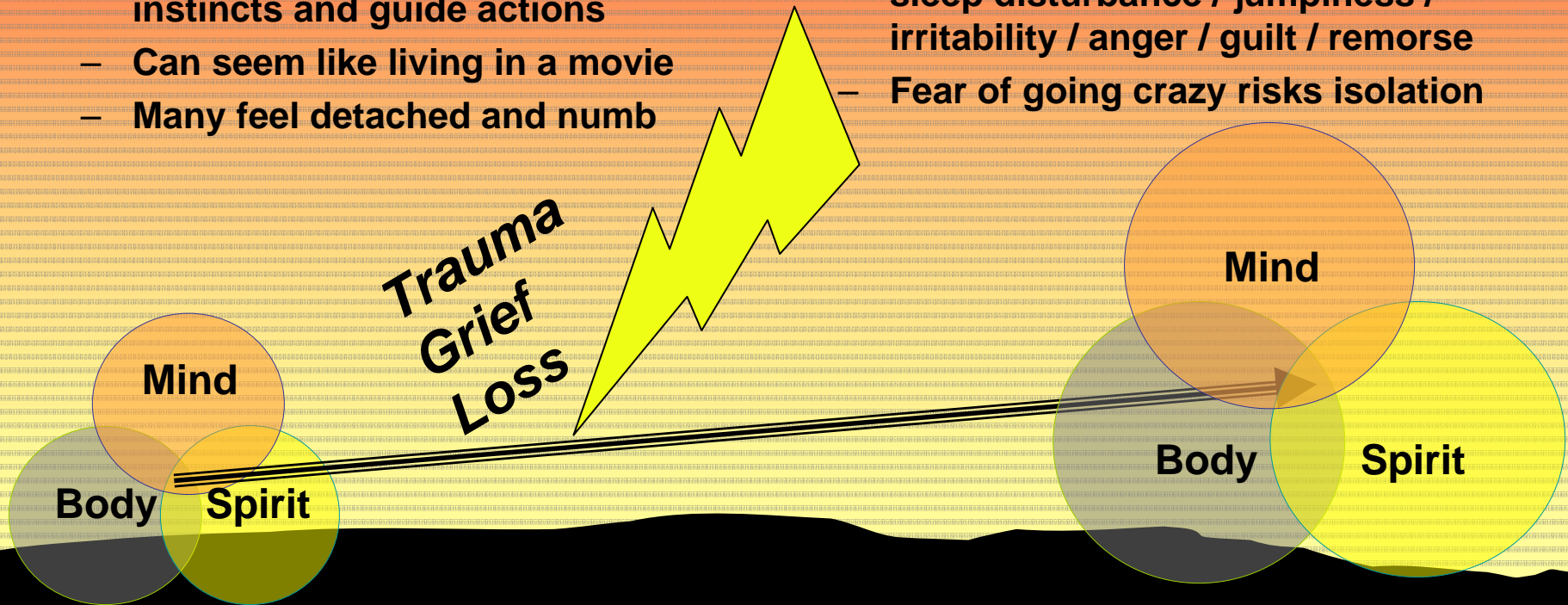
GRIT – Focus to *Survive*

- Training kicks in...to harness instincts and guide actions
- Can seem like living in a movie
- Many feel detached and numb

GRACE – Adapt to “*new normal*”

- Hero’s journey to restore performance
- Normal reactions include flashbacks / sleep disturbance / jumpiness / irritability / anger / guilt / remorse
- Fear of going crazy risks isolation

**Trauma
Grief
Loss**



GROWTH: RESET Well Being to *Thrive*

- Apply resilience toolkit (cognitive behavioral skills / progressive relaxation)
- Maintain sleep / food / rest / reintegration
- Re-establish unit / family battle rhythm
- Post-traumatic growth potential = goal



Never leave a fallen comrade

~Post-Traumatic Growth Potential~

- **Relating to Others:** People who experience trauma typically develop stronger bonds with loved ones, reestablish relationships, and/or gain more compassion for others
- **New Possibilities:** People who experience trauma may notice they are making choices in a more conscious manner, according to a plan. May be more likely to change things that need changing
- **Personal Strength:** People who experience trauma often express greater self-reliance, and feel more able to accept how things turn out. Find increased personal strength that may help get them through hardships they encounter in the future
- **Spiritual Change:** People who experience trauma may reevaluate spiritual beliefs, associate more with a community of similar believers, or reconnect with their spiritual roots
- **Appreciation of Life:** People who experience trauma typically describe greater appreciation of life. Some explain this as trying to live each day more fully. Some may rethink their values and priorities about what is important in their life

(Source: American Psychological Association)



You are not alone

~Building Resilience~

Factors that Support the Development of Resilience:

- Influence of at least one supportive person
- Presence of hope and optimism in the face of adversity
- Pleasant, active, social, nurturing, competitive personality
- Problem-solving skills with eagerness to learn and succeed
- View of self as victor instead of victim
- Attachment (faith, friend, hobby, interest) that enlarges world view beyond individual needs / concerns
- History of prior experiences/ training to build confidence
- Pattern of success leading to expectation of doing well in facing new challenges



~"BATTLEMIND" Training~

"BATTLEMIND" skills maximize mission success in combat, but *may lead to needless tragedy* if not adapted for life on the home front . . .

Buddies (cohesion) **vs.** *Withdrawal*

Accountability **vs.** *Controlling*

Targeted Aggression **vs.** *Inappropriate Aggression*

Tactical Awareness **vs.** *Hypervigilance*

Lethally Armed **vs.** *"Locked and Loaded" at Home*

Emotional Control **vs.** *Anger/Detachment*

Mission Operational Security (OPSEC) **vs.** *Secretiveness*

Individual Responsibility **vs.** *Guilt*

Non-Defensive (combat) Driving **vs.** *Aggressive Driving*

Discipline and Ordering **vs.** *Conflict*

-- The multi-phased Battle Mind training program, currently being implemented throughout the Army, was developed at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research



~Selected Web Resources~

- www.myarmylifetoo.com (Army Community Services)
- www.militarychild.org (Military Child Education Coalition)
- www.operationhomefront.net (“CINC House”)
- www.hooah4health.com (Comprehensive Info)
 - Click on “deployment”
 - Click on “family matters”
- www.usuhs.mil/psycourage.html (Coping Info)
- www.militaryonesource.com/ (Counseling & Stuff)
- <http://www.military.com/support> (Severely Injured)
- www.hqusareur.army.mil (Info Uber Ales . . . ;-))



Survival Basics for Extraordinary Stress

- Anticipate chaos
- Focus only on what is essential and within your control
- Accept what you cannot change
- Eat / Sleep / Exercise regularly
- Make your needs known
- Say no when you need to
- Be a friend to yourself and others
- Keep your sense of humor
- **Hold your faith**
- **Know that this too, in time, shall pass . . .**

**A VACUUM OF VULNERABILITY EXISTS –
PAY ATTENTION**



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Relating to Children During Extraordinary Times

- Maintain family routine and discipline
- Expect the unexpected
- Be real
- Dance with their fears
- Allow safe 'acting out' of feelings
- Stop / Look / Listen / Love
- Watch for sibling abuse
- Work together to keep absent parent(s) present
- Play together
- Live your Faith

**HEALTH AND HEALING ARE IN OUR
RELATIONSHIPS**



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~FRG Leadership Tips~

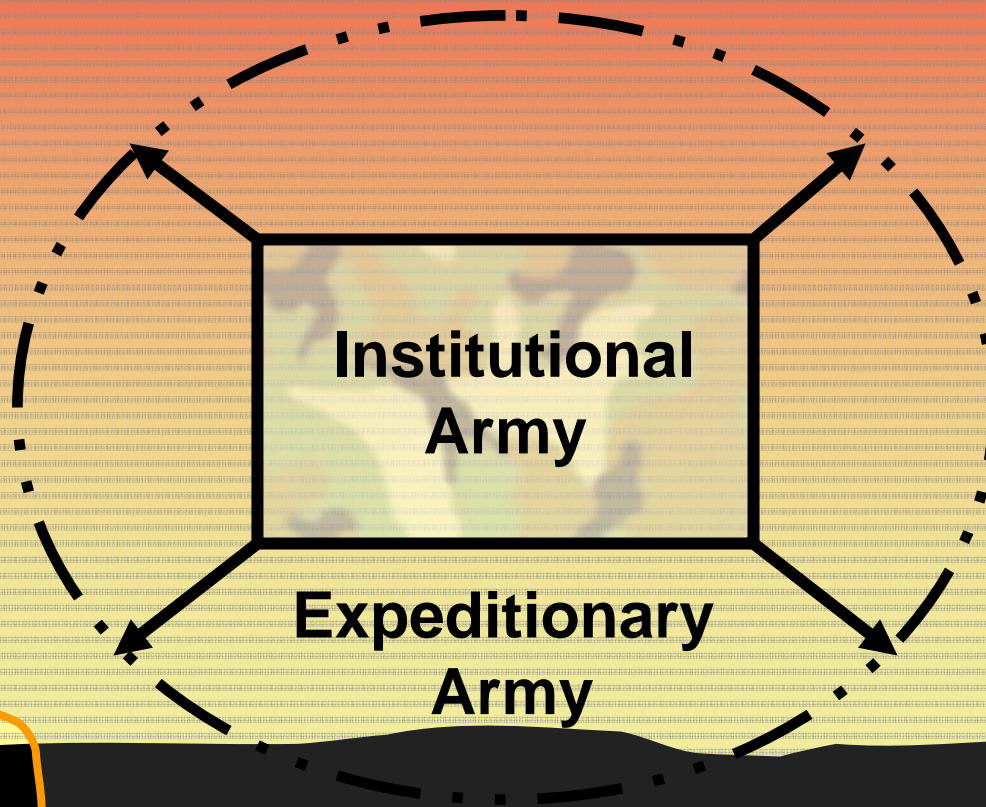
- **Zero tolerance for rumors**
- **Never underestimate the power of mail**
- **Recruit a la Tom Sawyer style**
- **Maintain regular contact with all members**
- **Brace yourself for the slings and arrows of outrageous misfortune**
- **Share frustrations without taking everything personally**
- **Set realistic limits for yourself**
- **Make fun**
- **Smile in the face of absurdity**
- **Say "Hah" as needed. . .**

WE SEE THE WORLD WE MAKE



Never leave a fallen comrade

Future Challenge... The Future is *NOW*



“Extreme Risk-taker” Generation



Never Leave a Fallen Comrade

Parting Thoughts

**"This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end.
But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."**

--Winston S. Churchill

November 10, 1942

**At the time, I did what I knew to do, and when I knew better, I
did better."**

--Maya Angelou

**"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a
memory no one can steal."**

--Irish saying



Team Army



~God Bless Our Army Family~



You are not alone